SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

PHILOSOPHY
Higher

First edition — published October 2005

National Course Specification

COURSE Philosophy (Higher)

COURSE CODE To be allocated

COURSE STRUCTURE

This Course has four mandatory Units which are:

Critical Thinking in Philosophy (Higher)	0.5 credits (20 hours)
Metaphysics (Higher)	0.5 credits (20 hours)
Epistemology (Higher)	1 credit (40 hours)
Moral Philosophy (Higher)	1 credit (40 hours)

All Courses include 40 hours over and above the 120 hours for the Units. This may be used for induction, extending the range of learning and teaching approaches, support, consolidation, integration of learning and preparation for external assessment.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, candidates would normally be expected to have attained one of the following, or equivalent:

- Intermediate 2 Philosophy Course or Unit(s)
- Intermediate 2 Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies Course or Unit(s)
- A social subjects Course or Unit(s) at Intermediate 2

Administrative Information

Publication date: October 2005

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 01

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2005

This publication may be reproduced in whole or in part for educational purposes provided that no profit is derived from reproduction and that, if reproduced in part, the source is acknowledged.

Additional copies of this specification (including unit specifications) can be purchased from the Scottish Qualifications Authority for £7.50. **Note:** Unit specifications can be purchased individually for £2.50 (minimum order £5).

National Course Specification (cont)

COURSE Philosophy (Higher)

PROGRESSION

This Course or its Units may provide progression to:

- Advanced Higher Philosophy or Advanced Higher Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies
- Further or Higher Education Courses which include the study of philosophy or require the ability to reason in a critical manner
- Employment

CREDIT VALUE

The Higher Course in Philosophy is allocated 24 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 6.

SCQF points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.

CORE SKILLS

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components in this Course.

National Course Specification: course details

COURSE Philosophy (Higher)

RATIONALE

Scotland has long been recognised as providing educational opportunities to its citizens that encompass both breadth and depth. The need to educate the whole person, and not simply concentrate on immediately obvious practical skills, is also firmly embedded in all Scottish educational philosophy. As a result education focuses on the dual objectives of providing citizens with practical skills and knowledge related to employment, and broader intellectual and social skills which enable them to participate fully in society and lead rich, fulfilling lives. It is also recognised that these broader skills are increasingly important as societies become more complex and ideologically diverse. Scottish society today has been influenced by a wide variety of cultures and traditions, and it is therefore important that all its citizens are able to develop and express their own values and perspectives in a reasoned way. In addition, it is important that they are able to discuss and reflect upon perspectives and values which may be different from their own. This can only be accomplished through a process of reasoned debate and discussion which acknowledges shared human experiences and also the validity of alternative views. Developing a reasoned and structured approach to all forms of discourse will contribute to this process.

The opportunity for individuals to develop and discuss their own values and perspectives, and learn to appreciate alternative values and perspectives, is an important aspect of Scottish Primary and Secondary Education. For this reason the process of discussion, debate and reflection features in many areas of the curriculum from P1-S4. The Higher Philosophy Course provides the opportunity for candidates to continue to develop the concepts and skills needed for productive social discourse and offers certificated progression in S5 and S6. The Course is also suitable for delivery in Further Education colleges and is appropriate for adult students who have an interest in philosophical issues.

Candidates who gain a Course award will be in an good position to continue their studies of philosophical issues in Further Education colleges or Higher Education Institutions. Those who choose to progress to study alternative subjects will also benefit: developing critical thinking skills and the ability to reason effectively is an important part of the Higher Philosophy Course and these skills are of relevance in all subject areas. This will enable candidates to develop as members of society who can express their own opinions and values confidently but also appreciate the opinions and values of others.

The Course consists of four mandatory Units. The *Critical Thinking in Philosophy* Unit helps candidates to develop an understanding of good and bad arguments and the skills necessary to reason in an effective manner. In the *Metaphysics* Unit candidates investigate a perennial philosophical debate and the different positions adopted in relation to that debate. The *Epistemology* Unit focuses on questions surrounding the nature, sources and possibilities of knowledge. *Moral Philosophy* involves the study of issues and positions concerning moral judgements and their nature.

AIMS

The Course aims to allow candidates to:

- develop critical thinking skills which are of importance in all areas of human life and discourse
- develop knowledge and understanding of philosophical techniques, issues, positions and concepts which are relevant in many areas of human life and discourse

National Course Specification: course details (cont)

COURSE Philosophy (Higher)

- develop analytical and evaluative skills which will allow them to examine the reasoning and assumptions on which the positions and theories they study are based
- present their own ideas and opinions in a reasoned and structured manner
- gain insight from the ideas and opinions of others which may conflict with their own
- engage personally with a range of important questions and issues in order to inform their own ideas and opinions in a way which contributes to personal and social development

National Course Specification: course details (cont)

COURSE Philosophy (Higher)

COURSE CONTENT

The Course consists of four mandatory Units (*Critical Thinking in Philosophy*, *Metaphysics*, *Epistemology* and *Moral Philosophy*). Although the content of each Unit does not presuppose knowledge acquired in the other Units, there are significant opportunities to integrate both knowledge and skills while studying the Course. **In particular, the knowledge and skills acquired in the *Critical Thinking in Philosophy* Unit are directly relevant to the remaining three Units in the Course.** Whenever an opportunity to integrate knowledge and skills across the Units arises, candidates should be made aware of this and be encouraged to maximise this potential. Detailed guidance on opportunities for integration and development can be found in the 'Guidance on Learning and Teaching Approaches for this Course' in the Course Specification.

A summary of the content of each Unit appears below:

1 Critical Thinking in Philosophy (Higher)

It is strongly recommended that candidates begin the Course by studying this Unit: The knowledge and skills they acquire are invaluable and directly relevant when studying the issues, positions and arguments in the remaining Units.

In this Unit candidates develop an understanding of the nature of arguments and some of the characteristics of effective and ineffective arguments. Candidates then use this understanding to critically analyse and evaluate previously unseen examples of ordinary language arguments.

Candidates must study **ALL** content. A brief summary of the content of the Unit appears below:

Candidates gain an understanding of the nature of arguments and of some of the terms and concepts needed to critically analyse and evaluate arguments in a philosophical manner. The content is studied under two headings which are:

- understanding the nature of arguments
- reliable and unreliable arguments

A detailed outline of all mandatory content can be found in the Appendix at the end of the Unit Specification.

2 Metaphysics (Higher)

In this Unit candidates study **ONE** metaphysical debate from a choice of two. The relevant metaphysical debates are:

- Debate 1: Is there a rational basis for belief in God?
- Debate 2: Do we have free will?

Candidates investigate specific positions which are adopted in relation to the chosen debate. They also study objections to these positions and replies to these objections.

National Course Specification: course details (cont)

COURSE Philosophy (Higher)

A detailed outline of the mandatory content for both debates can be found in the Appendix at the end of the Unit Specification. Candidates must study **ALL** content **in relation to their chosen debate**.

3 Epistemology (Higher)

In this Unit candidates study specific philosophical issues in the area of Epistemology. They also study the positions of either René Descartes or David Hume. The Unit is divided into two Sections and a brief overview of each Section appears below:

Section 1:

There is no choice of options in this Section of the Unit and candidates must study all mandatory content.

Candidates investigate three questions which are relevant in the area of epistemology. The three questions are:

- Why are knowledge claims a problem in philosophy?
- What is knowledge?
- Can knowledge claims be justified?

Section 2:

In this Section of the Unit there is a choice of option to be studied. Candidates investigate **either** a specific rationalist **or** a specific empiricist epistemological position. The options are:

- Option A: Descartes' Rationalism

OR

- Option B: Hume's Empiricism

Candidates must study all mandatory content in relation to their chosen option.

The positions adopted by each philosopher are based on reasoning and assumptions which can only properly be understood by examining the writings of the relevant philosopher. Candidates must therefore investigate the chosen position by studying key extracts from the writings of that philosopher. **The key extracts are prescribed.**

A detailed outline of all mandatory content for each Section, including the key extracts for each option in Section Two, can be found in the Appendix at the end of the Unit Specification.

4 Moral Philosophy (Higher)

There are two Sections in this Unit and candidates must study **ALL** content in **BOTH** sections. A brief overview of each Section appears below:

National Course Specification: course details (cont)

COURSE Philosophy (Higher)

Section 1:

In this section of the Unit candidates investigate two specific normative moral theories which illustrate both a **consequentialist** and a **deontological** approach to moral judgements. The specific theories are:

- the consequentialist theory of Utilitarianism as illustrated by the ideas of Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill
- the deontological theory of Immanuel Kant

Section 2:

In this Section of the Unit candidates are introduced to one specific meta-ethical issue concerning the nature of moral judgements. They study the linguistic issue of what a person is doing when he/she claims that an action is right or wrong. Candidates focus on the question '**What are we doing when we claim that an action is morally right?**' and investigate an **emotivist** response to this question.

Questions in Unit and Course assessment will sample across the mandatory content of **BOTH** sections. It is therefore of vital importance that candidates are familiar with **ALL** content in **BOTH** sections. A detailed outline of the mandatory content for each Section can be found in the Appendix at the end of the Unit Specification.

National Course Specification: course details (cont)

COURSE Philosophy (Higher)

ASSESSMENT

To achieve the Course award the candidate must pass all Unit assessments as well as the Course assessment. The candidate's grade is based on the Course assessment.

Assessment objectives

The aim of both Unit and Course assessment is to allow candidates to demonstrate competence in the following areas:

Knowledge and Understanding of:

- the nature of argument
- a metaphysical debate and positions adopted in relation to that debate
- philosophical issues and positions in the area of epistemology
- normative moral theories
- meta-ethical issues

The skills of Critical Analysis and Evaluation with reference to:

- ordinary language arguments
- positions adopted in relation to a metaphysical debate
- normative moral theories
- the meta-ethical position of emotivism
- philosophical issues and positions in the area of epistemology
- prescribed extracts from the writings of either Descartes or Hume

Allocation of Marks:

A summary of the relative weighting of marks in Unit and Course assessment appears below:

Type of Assessment	Knowledge and Understanding	Analysis and Evaluation
Unit Assessment	60% of the marks available	40% of the marks available
Course Assessment	50% of the marks available	50% of the marks available

Unit assessment

Satisfactory evidence of the attainment of all Outcomes and Performance Criteria for each Unit is in the form of written and/or recorded oral responses to structured or extended response questions. To maintain reliability and credibility, assessment evidence is produced under supervision, ensuring that it is the candidate's own work. The evidence is produced in response to a closed-book test with a time limit of 30 minutes each for the *Critical Thinking in Philosophy* and *Metaphysics* Units. The time limit for Unit assessment in the *Epistemology* and *Moral Philosophy* Units is one hour each.

Further details about Unit assessment for this Course can be found in the NAB materials and in the Unit Specifications.

National Course Specification: course details (cont)

COURSE Philosophy (Higher)

Course assessment

Attainment in the Course is assessed through an individual candidate's performance in a final exam. The exam is in the form of a single Question Paper. The Question Paper contains questions in relation to all four Units in the Course and has a time allocation of **2 hours 40 minutes**. The number of marks available for the Question Paper is **120**.

Candidates are required to attempt both structured and extended response questions which sample across the Course content.

Further details of the Course assessment are given in the Course Assessment Specification and in the Specimen Question Paper.

Link between Unit and Course assessment/added value

Individual Unit assessment instruments allow candidates to demonstrate a level of knowledge, understanding and skills which is appropriate for attaining a Unit award at Higher. They also allow candidates to demonstrate the ability to analyse and evaluate these concepts and issues in a reasoned and structured manner.

When completing the Course assessment candidates have the opportunity to demonstrate the greater attainment required for the Course award by:

- demonstrating the long-term retention of knowledge and skills
- demonstrating the ability to answer questions relating to all Units on a single occasion
- answering questions in which the more complex skills of critical analysis and evaluation attract a higher proportion of the marks available than in Unit assessment
- integrating the knowledge and skills acquired in the *Critical Thinking in Philosophy* Unit in the remaining Units of the Course
- demonstrating the ability to integrate other aspects of knowledge and skills across the component Units
- demonstrating a greater depth and breadth of knowledge and understanding

GRADE DESCRIPTIONS AT A AND C

The candidate's grade will be based on the total score obtained from the Course assessment. The descriptions below indicate the nature of achievement required for an award at Grade C and A in the Course.

National Course Specification: course details (cont)

COURSE Philosophy (Higher)

Skills	Grade C	Grade A
Knowledge and Understanding	Candidates have described some (but not all) of the features of argument and the philosophical issues, theories and positions in relation to each Unit. The descriptions are mainly clear and largely accurate.	Candidates have described the main features of arguments and the philosophical issues, theories and positions in relation to each Unit. The descriptions are clear, accurate and presented in a well-structured manner. The descriptions may provide evidence of the integration of knowledge and understanding across the Units of the Course.
Critical Analysis and Evaluation	Candidates have explained some (but not all) of the stages of reasoning and the assumptions on which ordinary language arguments and philosophical positions, theories and accounts of knowledge are based. Candidates have explained some (but not all) of the following: deductive and inductive reasoning; sound and unsound arguments; examples of fallacious reasoning (CTU). Candidates have explained some (but not all) of the implications, strengths and weaknesses of positions adopted in relation to a metaphysical debate and normative moral theories, the meta-ethical position of emotivism and an account of knowledge. Candidates have made attempts to assess, or reach conclusions on, the soundness of ordinary language arguments and the relative merits of normative moral theories, the meta-ethical position of emotivism and an account of knowledge.	Candidates have explained the main stages of reasoning and the assumptions on which ordinary language arguments and philosophical positions, theories and accounts of knowledge are based. Candidates have explained the following: deductive and inductive reasoning; sound and unsound arguments; examples of fallacious reasoning (CTU). Candidates have explained the main implications, strengths and weaknesses of positions adopted in relation to a metaphysical debate and normative moral theories, the meta-ethical position of emotivism and an account of knowledge. Candidates have assessed or reached conclusions on the soundness of ordinary language arguments and the relative merits of normative moral theories, the meta-ethical position of emotivism and an account of knowledge.

National Course Specification: course details (cont)

COURSE Philosophy (Higher)

Skills	Grade C	Grade A
	Candidates have given at least one reason which supports the assessments or conclusions they have reached. The points made are mainly clear and largely accurate. The points made relate to the question asked.	Candidates have given two or more developed reasons – based on evidence, aspects and/or sources previously discussed – which support the assessments or conclusions reached. The points made are clear and accurate. The points made are presented in a well-structured manner and are used to support a conclusion that answers the question asked. There may be evidence that the candidate is aware of the wider implications and/or relevance of the skills, theories, positions and issues they have studied. There may be evidence of the integration of knowledge and skills across the Units of the Course.

National Course Specification: course details (cont)

COURSE Philosophy (Higher)

ESTIMATES AND APPEALS

Estimates

In preparing estimates, evidence of performance should be considered from across the breadth of coverage of content of the Course and must take account of performance in all Units. Further advice on the preparation of estimates is given in the Course Assessment Specification.

Appeals

Assessment items used to support an appeal should contain all of the following:

- evidence of long-term retention of knowledge and skills
- evidence which samples across all Units
- evidence of the ability to perform more complex tasks than those demanded for Unit assessment
- evidence of the ability to apply and adapt the skills of analysis and evaluation across Units and in a variety of contexts
- a clear indication that all the above evidence has been gathered under controlled conditions

Many centres may choose to hold a preliminary exam which conforms to the advice given in the Course Assessment Specification. Evidence generated from such a prelim will be of great value when considering appeals. Where a centre does not hold a prelim, the evidence submitted must clearly sample across all areas of the Course, show evidence of long-term retention and the potential to perform more complex tasks than those demanded for Unit assessment. Instruments of assessment used must conform to the guidelines given in the Course Assessment Specification and clearly show a level of attainment in line with the Grade Descriptions for the Course.

Individual NAB items, or their equivalent, do not provide sufficient evidence for estimates and appeals on their own. This is because they:

- only sample across the content of one Unit
- do not attract the same proportion of marks for the more complex skills of analysis and evaluation
- do not require candidates to sample across all Course content on a single occasion
- do not give candidates the opportunity to integrate knowledge and skills from across the Units

However, evidence gathered from Unit assessment items may contribute to an appeal if this clearly shows a level of attainment in line with elements of the Grade Descriptions for the Course. Marking schemes should be included with all evidence submitted in support of an appeal.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

All National Courses are subject to external marking and/or moderation. External markers, visiting examiners and moderators are trained by SQA to apply national standards.

National Course Specification: course details (cont)

COURSE Philosophy (Higher)

The Units of all Courses are subject to internal moderation and may also be chosen for external moderation. This is to ensure that national standards are being applied across all subjects.

Courses may be assessed by a variety of methods. Where marking is undertaken by a trained marker in their own time, markers' meetings are held to ensure that a consistent standard is applied. The work of all markers is subject to scrutiny by the Principal Assessor.

To assist centres, Principal Assessor and Senior Moderator reports are published on SQA's website **www.sqa.org.uk**.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS COURSE

Induction to the Course

The most important starting-point for the Course will be to establish appropriate expectations and attitudes among the candidates. This will involve making it clear that the Course does not simply involve learning facts about philosophical issues, theories and positions. Philosophy, by its very nature is an interactive activity since it involves assessing the relative merits of competing claims. It cannot simply be learned by reading books and writing essays; candidates must be given frequent opportunities to engage in debate and other interactive activities. Candidates therefore need to develop an enquiring attitude which allows them to think critically about the issues, theories and positions they study. They must also learn to listen to, and reflect upon, the reasoning and opinions expressed by their teacher or lecturer and fellow students. This will encourage candidates to express their own opinions with confidence and create a climate in which reasoned, productive philosophical debate can take place.

Candidates should be made aware of the attitudes and skills which will be expected from them before teaching of the Course begins. They should understand that they will need to:

- respect the right of others to express values and positions which may conflict with their own
- develop the confidence to share their values and positions with others who may not agree with them
- identify and investigate the stages of reasoning and the important assumptions which underpin the theories and positions they study
- critically analyse their own values and positions, as well as those of others, in a reasoned and structured manner
- review and critically evaluate philosophical issues, theories and positions
- reach clear conclusions about philosophical issues, theories and positions based on the information and evidence they have studied
- be prepared to explain the reasoning they have used in order to reach these conclusions

This can be done in many ways in light of the prior experience of candidates, the range of candidates studying the Course and available resources. Teachers and lecturers will need to use their professional judgement. Attitudes cannot be assessed or instilled but can only be encouraged. However, candidates should have a clear idea of the skills and attitudes they will need to develop and demonstrate during their study of the Higher Philosophy Course.

National Course Specification: course details (cont)

COURSE Philosophy (Higher)

The Order of Delivery of Component Units: maximising opportunities for the integration and development of knowledge and skills

The preferred order for the delivery of component Units is a matter which each centre must decide for itself. This will depend upon the number of staff members who are delivering the Course and the organisation of individual timetables. **However, it is strongly advised that the *Critical Thinking in Philosophy* Unit is studied at the beginning of the Course**. This Unit allows candidates to develop the concepts and the skills they will need to investigate issues, theories and positions in the remaining three Units of the Course.

The following models suggest appropriate orders for the delivery of Units and indicate opportunities to integrate and develop knowledge and skills across the Course. Model 1 is suggested in centres where only one staff member is delivering all Units. Model 2 is suggested where two staff members share the delivery of Units.

Model 1: Assuming one staff member is delivering all Units:

1 Critical Thinking in Philosophy
2 Metaphysics
3 Epistemology
4 Moral Philosophy

Putting the *Critical Thinking in Philosophy* Unit first allows candidates to acquire the concepts and skills that are needed to investigate any issue, theory or position in a reasoned and structured manner. These concepts and skills will considerably enhance their ability to investigate the issues, theories and positions in the remaining three Units of the Course. Candidates will also be able to apply these concepts, and practise these skills, in the context of a self-contained and well-defined philosophical debate if they then study the *Metaphysics* Unit.

In relation to the order of the remaining two Units, *Epistemology* and *Moral Philosophy* are traditionally linked, and there will be opportunities to draw attention to these links if the Units are studied in succession. Furthermore, it is suggested that the meta-ethical section of the *Moral Philosophy* Unit would benefit from a general introduction to meta-ethics. Such an introduction should contrast the linguistic issue studied with other metaphysical and epistemological issues in meta-ethics. These issues will be more easily understood by candidates if they have already studied the *Metaphysics* and *Epistemology* Units.

Model 2: Assuming two staff members are delivering Units:

Staff Member 1:

1 Critical Thinking in Philosophy
2 Metaphysics

Staff Member 2:

1 Epistemology
2 Moral Philosophy

National Course Specification: course details (cont)

COURSE Philosophy (Higher)

As with Model 1, this order enables candidates to apply critical thinking concepts and skills when investigating the issues, theories and positions in other Units in the Course. Likewise the same reasons as those given for Model 1 determine the suggested order of the Units in this Model.

Where two members of staff are delivering separate Units, care must be taken to adopt a common approach when developing and applying critical thinking skills. This will avoid confusion for candidates and maximise opportunities to develop and refine these skills in the variety of contexts available.

Developing Knowledge and Understanding and the skills of Critical Analysis and Evaluation

There are many ways to promote knowledge and understanding, and critical analysis and evaluation skills. Appropriate methods will, as mentioned above, depend on the prior experience of candidates, the range of candidates studying the Course and the resources available. A menu of possible activities appears below. This menu is not exhaustive, but reflects a variety of learning and teaching approaches:

- teachers' presentations of information
- teacher-led question and answer sessions
- individual study which is reinforced by structured questions
- individual/group/paired work which is focused on the retrieval of information
- feedback sessions from individual/group/paired work which involves recording information, stages of reasoning and conclusions
- multiple choice questions — these may be attempted individually, in pairs or in groups - they could be approached in the manner of a formative assessment, quiz, match-up or arranging-under-correct-headings exercises
- true-or-false activities which require the individual/group/pair to give reasons for the choice of answer
- visits by external speakers which involve both presentation and feedback
- structured debates where candidates are required to propose or oppose a motion which may not be in agreement with their personal views
- homework exercises which are designed to reinforce or extend activities in the classroom or lecture theatre
- structured individual/group/paired study of sources which relate to the issues, theories arguments and positions being investigated
- attempting past paper questions individually or in groups/pairs
- feedback from Unit assessments which highlights the achievements and next steps for candidates

Assessment as a Learning and Teaching Opportunity

Unit assessment provides a clear indication of whether or not candidates have achieved the minimum standards required to pass an individual Unit. As such, Unit assessment is summative. However, for candidates who require reassessment and/or intend to attempt the Course assessment, all assessment has a formative value.

National Course Specification: course details (cont)

COURSE Philosophy (Higher)

In order to make maximum use of assessment, teachers and lecturers need to provide meaningful feedback on all items of formative and summative assessment. This feedback should highlight areas where candidates have performed well. It should also highlight areas where candidates need additional development. The nature of such feedback will depend on the prior experience of candidates, the range of candidates and the resources available.

The Use of the Additional 40 Hours

A summary of the use of the additional 40 hours would comprise:

- an initial orientation programme outlining the content of the Course and the skills to be developed
- the provision of additional support and follow-up assessment in order to ensure all Outcomes of component Units have been achieved
- engaging in discussion and practice to extend the use of analytical and evaluative skills in a variety of contexts
- the use of oral or written extended responses — this will help to integrate and extend skills and provide estimated grades

CANDIDATES WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

This Course Specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering alternative Outcomes for Units. For information on these, please refer to the document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* (SQA, 2004).

National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Critical Thinking in Philosophy (Higher)

CODE To be allocated

COURSE Philosophy (Higher)

SUMMARY

This Unit is a mandatory Unit of the Higher Philosophy Course, but it can also be taken as a free-standing Unit.

This Unit offers progression for candidates who have studied the Intermediate 2 Philosophy Course or Units. It is also suitable as a Higher level introduction for those who have no background in the subject. In this Unit, candidates develop the skills necessary to examine arguments and recognise the characteristics of effective and ineffective arguments. The understanding and skills developed in this Unit are relevant in all areas of human life. The ability to argue clearly and to recognise strong and weak reasoning in the arguments of others is a powerful tool in all personal and social contexts.

Specific features of both effective and ineffective arguments are studied in this Unit but the understanding and critical thinking skills developed are relevant in a wide variety of contexts. These skills prepare candidates for the study of Philosophy at Advanced Higher or in Courses at Further Education colleges or Higher Education Institutions. Candidates will also be prepared for the study of any other subject which requires the ability to understand and analyse arguments. In addition, candidates will have demonstrated the skills necessary for entry into any field of employment where the ability to reason constructively is required.

OUTCOMES

1 Demonstrate an understanding of the nature of arguments
2 Critically analyse ordinary language arguments
3 Critically evaluate ordinary language arguments

Administrative Information

Superclass:

Publication date: October 2005

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 01

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2005

This publication may be reproduced in whole or in part for educational purposes provided that no profit is derived from reproduction and that, if reproduced in part, the source is acknowledged.

Additional copies of this Unit specification can be purchased from the Scottish Qualifications Authority. The cost for each Unit specification is £2.50. (A handling charge of £1.95 will apply to all orders for priced items.)

National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

UNIT Critical Thinking in Philosophy (Higher)

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, candidates would normally be expected to have attained one of the following, or equivalent:

- Intermediate 2 Philosophy Course or Unit(s)
- Intermediate 2 Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies Course or Unit(s)
- A social subjects Course or Unit(s) at Intermediate 2

CREDIT VALUE

0.5 credits at Higher (3 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 6*).

**SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

CORE SKILLS

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components in this Unit.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT Critical Thinking in Philosophy (Higher)

Acceptable performance in this Unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the Unit Specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

OUTCOME 1

Demonstrate an understanding of the nature of arguments.

Performance Criteria

(a) describe the difference between statements and arguments
(b) describe the difference between deductive and inductive reasoning
(c) use ordinary language examples to support these descriptions

OUTCOME 2

Critically analyse ordinary language arguments.

Performance Criteria

(a) identify the premises and conclusions of ordinary language arguments
(b) present these arguments in a way which demonstrates the stages of reasoning involved
(c) explain whether these arguments employ deductive or inductive reasoning

OUTCOME 3

Critically evaluate ordinary language arguments.

Performance Criteria

(a) explain specific examples of fallacious reasoning in ordinary language arguments
(b) explain whether or not the conclusions of these arguments follow from the premises
(c) explain whether these arguments are sound or unsound
(d) state reasons which support the explanations given

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Critical Thinking in Philosophy (Higher)

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

Details of the mandatory content for this Unit can be found in the Appendix at the end of this Unit Specification.

To demonstrate satisfactory attainment of all the Outcomes and Performance Criteria candidates must produce written and/or recorded oral evidence which samples across the mandatory content. The evidence should be produced in response to a closed book, supervised test with a time limit of 30 minutes. It should be gathered on a single occasion.

The mandatory content for this Unit should be assessed by short answer, restricted and extended response questions. The questions should sample across the mandatory content and should allow candidates to generate answers which demonstrate competence in all Outcomes and Performance Criteria. Sixty per cent of the marks available should be awarded for demonstrating understanding in line with Outcome 1. The remaining 40 per cent of the marks available should be awarded for critical analysis and evaluation in line with Outcomes 2 and 3.

Candidates will be expected to critically analyse and evaluate previously unseen examples of ordinary language arguments in both Unit and Course assessment.

If re-assessment is required, it should sample across a different range of mandatory content.

The use of a cut-off score is appropriate for this assessment.

Unit assessment is holistic in nature. When reassessment is required individual candidates should therefore attempt a new assessment in its entirety to ensure that a different range of mandatory content is sampled.

The standard to be applied, cut-off score and the breadth of coverage are illustrated in the National Assessment Bank items available for this Unit. If a centre wishes to design its own assessments for this Unit they should be of a comparable standard.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Critical Thinking in Philosophy (Higher)

This part of the Unit Specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 20 hours.

GUIDANCE ON THE CONTENT AND CONTEXT FOR THIS UNIT

If candidates are studying the Higher Philosophy Course, it is strongly recommended that they begin the Course by studying this Unit. The knowledge and skills they acquire are directly relevant when studying the issues, positions and arguments in the remaining Units.

In this Unit candidates develop an understanding of the nature of arguments and some of the characteristics of effective and ineffective arguments. Candidates then use this understanding to critically analyse and evaluate previously unseen examples of ordinary language arguments.

Candidates must study **ALL** content. A brief summary of the content of the Unit appears below:

Candidates gain an understanding of the nature of arguments and of some of the terms and concepts needed to critically analyse and evaluate arguments in a philosophical manner. The content is studied under two headings which are:

- Understanding the nature of arguments
- Reliable and unreliable arguments

A detailed outline of all mandatory content can be found in the Appendix at the end of these Support Notes.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

Throughout their study of this Unit, candidates will develop knowledge and skills which are relevant when analysing all forms of philosophical and everyday human discourse. This fact should be emphasised at the beginning of the learning and teaching process. Teachers and lecturers should therefore avoid introducing relevant terms and concepts in a wholly abstract manner. For example:

- When investigating the distinction between statements and arguments, candidates might be asked to distinguish between examples of ordinary language statements and arguments and to discuss the differences they recognise. This will allow them to appreciate fully the ways in which statements and arguments function differently in everyday human discourse. It will also help them to understand that statements are sometimes used erroneously to create the impression that a point has been established.

- Candidates might also be encouraged to find or compose their own examples of statements and arguments. This will reinforce their understanding of the distinctions involved.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Critical Thinking in Philosophy (Higher)

- When introducing the common fallacy of *attacking the person,* candidates might be asked to comment on real-life examples from television/radio debates, newspaper columns or letters pages. Equally, teachers or lecturers might choose to adapt or compose topical/relevant examples. By identifying that there is a problem of reasoning and by discussing the nature of that problem, candidates will gain an understanding of the fallacy. They will also be more likely to recognise this fallacy when encountering it in new contexts.

- Understanding can also be reinforced by encouraging candidates to find, or compose their own, examples of the fallacy of *attacking the person.*

Candidates will be expected to critically analyse and evaluate previously unseen examples of ordinary language arguments in both Unit and Course assessment.

This ability can be developed only if candidates are continually given practice in applying the relevant concepts and skills in new and varied contexts. Teachers and lecturers should ensure that candidates develop techniques to help them analyse and evaluate previously unseen ordinary language arguments in a reasoned and structured manner. One possible approach to developing such techniques appears below:

A variety of topical or relevant ordinary language arguments might be sourced or composed by the teacher/lecturer. Candidates can then critically analyse and evaluate the arguments by asking the following questions:

- What is the conclusion of the argument?
- What are the stated premises?
- How can the premises and conclusion be presented to show the stages of reasoning involved?
- Is the argument an example of deductive or inductive reasoning?
- Does the structure help to identify any stages of reasoning that might have been missed out (hidden premises)?
- If so, what might these hidden premises be?
- If the argument is deductive, must the conclusion necessarily be true if the premises are true? (valid argument)
- Does the argument use any of the forms of fallacious reasoning I have studied?
- Are any of the premises I have identified either obviously true, false or debatable in any way?
- If the premises are true/undebatable, must the conclusion necessarily be true (sound argument)?

Some of the content of this Unit can also be studied in the Intermediate 2 *Critical Thinking in Philosophy* Unit. If a centre makes the judgement that the Intermediate 2 Unit would be more appropriate for a particular candidate, the candidate can be assessed at that level without difficulty. However, it should be noted that there are differences in the skills assessed at that level. If candidates have already studied the Intermediate 2 *Critical Thinking in Philosophy* Unit there will be significant opportunities to build on and develop the knowledge and skills they have already acquired.

For candidates who study this Unit as part of the Higher Course, there are significant opportunities to integrate the skills they acquire in the remaining three Units. The ability to understand, critically analyse and evaluate the reasoning and assumptions on which specific arguments, theories and/or positions are based is relevant when studying all other Units in the Higher Course. **For this reason it is strongly recommended that this Unit, *Critical Thinking in Philosophy,* be delivered as an introductory Unit to the Course.**

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Critical Thinking in Philosophy (Higher)

Guidance on induction and a variety of classroom activities, can be found in the 'Guidance on Learning and Teaching Approaches for this Course' in the Course Details.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

Details of the appropriate conditions for assessment of competence in this Unit are outlined in the Evidence Requirements for the Unit in the Statement of Standards. Centres must make sure that all Unit assessment is carried out under the stated conditions.

Candidates will develop their knowledge and skills throughout their study of the mandatory content. This would suggest that appropriate instruments of assessment may best be attempted as an 'end of Unit' test.

The mandatory content for this Unit should be assessed by short answer, restricted and extended response questions. The questions should sample across the mandatory content. The questions should allow candidates to generate answers which demonstrate competence in all Outcomes and Performance Criteria. Sixty per cent of the marks available should be awarded for understanding in line with Outcome 1. The remaining 40 per cent of the marks available should be awarded for critical analysis and evaluation in line with Outcomes 2 and 3.

Appropriate instruments of assessment, marking schemes and cut-off scores are contained in the National Assessment Bank items for this Unit.

CANDIDATES WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

This Unit Specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering alternative Outcomes for Units. For information on these, please refer to the document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* (SQA, 2004).

National Unit Specification: Appendix to the statement of standards

UNIT Critical Thinking in Philosophy (Higher)

NB: This Appendix is within the Statement of Standards, ie the mandatory requirements of the Unit.

There are no options in this Unit: Candidates must study all content.

In this Unit candidates must develop an understanding of the nature of arguments and some of the characteristics of effective and ineffective arguments. Candidates must then use this understanding to critically analyse and evaluate examples of ordinary language arguments.

The specific content to be studied is detailed below:

Content

1 Understanding the nature of arguments

The purpose of an argument	establishing, rather than simply stating, a point
Distinction between statements and arguments	assertion and proof denial and refutation
Types of reasoning	deductive reasoning inductive reasoning
Argument structure	premises conclusion hidden premises

2 Reliable and unreliable arguments

Valid arguments	the conclusion follows from the premises
Sound arguments	the conclusion follows from true premises
Fallacious reasoning	circular reasoning slippery slope post hoc ergo propter hoc false dilemma argument from ignorance attacking the person appeals to consequences illegitimate appeals to authority

National Unit Specification: Appendix to the statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Critical Thinking in Philosophy (Higher)

Fallacious reasoning

It is accepted that writers may refer to similar forms of fallacious reasoning using different philosophical terms and so, for clarity and consistency, the following definitions are those which will be used in SQA documents and in Unit and Course assessments:

Circular reasoning: this fallacy is committed if its conclusion is justified using a premise that is itself justified on the basis of that conclusion.

Slippery slope: this fallacy is committed if, in the course of an argument, it is assumed (without further argument) that *x* will lead inevitably to *y*.

post hoc ergo propter hoc: this fallacy is committed if it is assumed, in the course of an argument, that because *x* and *y* occur one after the other that the one causes the other.

False dilemma: this fallacy is committed if, in the course of an argument, it is presumed without argument that *p* and *q* are the only possibilities, when in fact there are other possibilities.

Argument from ignorance: this fallacy is committed if it is argued that since *p* has not been proved true, it must be false (or that since *p* has not been proved false, it must be true)

Attacking the person: this fallacy is committed if it is argued that *p* is false on the ground that it is advanced by a particular person, for example because that person stands to gain from our acceptance of it as true or because that person's behaviour is not consistent with the truth of *p*.

Appeals to consequences: this fallacy is committed if it is argued that p must be true because it has desirable consequences, or false because it has undesirable consequences.

Illegitimate appeals to authority: this fallacy is committed if a conclusion *c* is inferred from the fact that some person or group asserts *c*, without justifying the right of that person or group to be regarded as authoritative in this matter.

National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Metaphysics (Higher)

CODE To be allocated

COURSE Philosophy (Higher)

SUMMARY

This Unit is a mandatory Unit of the Higher Philosophy Course, but it can also be taken as a free-standing Unit.

This Unit offers progression for candidates who have studied the Intermediate 2 Philosophy Course or Units. It is also suitable as a Higher level introduction for those who have no background in the subject. The debates and positions studied in this Unit are relevant to many questions of ultimate human significance, for example: Is human life simply an accident of nature? Is there some ultimate meaning and purpose to be found in the universe? Do I have control over my actions? Are my actions simply a product of my genes and environment?

Candidates develop an understanding of a specific metaphysical debate and positions adopted in relation to that debate. They study **either** the debate concerning the existence of God **or** the free will/determinism debate. Candidates then critically analyse and evaluate the specific positions which are relevant to the chosen debate.

A specific metaphysical debate and positions are studied in this Unit but the understanding and critical thinking skills developed are relevant in a wide variety of contexts. The skills and content prepare candidates for the study of Philosophy at Advanced Higher or in Courses at Further Education colleges or Higher Education Institutions. Candidates will also be prepared for the study of any other subject which requires the ability to understand, analyse and evaluate complex problems or positions. In addition, candidates will have demonstrated the skills necessary for entry into any field of employment where abstract reasoning is required.

OUTCOMES

1 Critically analyse a metaphysical debate.
2 Critically evaluate positions adopted in relation to a metaphysical debate.

Administrative Information

Superclass:

Publication date: October 2005

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 01

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2005

This publication may be reproduced in whole or in part for educational purposes provided that no profit is derived from reproduction and that, if reproduced in part, the source is acknowledged.

Additional copies of this Unit specification can be purchased from the Scottish Qualifications Authority. The cost for each Unit specification is £2.50. (A handling charge of £1.95 will apply to all orders for priced items.)

National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

UNIT Metaphysics (Higher)

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, candidates would normally be expected to have attained one of the following, or equivalent:

- Intermediate 2 Philosophy Course or Unit(s)
- Intermediate 2 Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies Course or Unit(s)
- A social subjects Course or Unit(s) at Intermediate 2

CREDIT VALUE

0.5 credits at Higher (3 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 6*).

**SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

CORE SKILLS

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components in this Unit.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT Metaphysics (Higher)

Acceptable performance in this Unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the Unit Specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

OUTCOME 1

Critically analyse a metaphysical debate.

Performance Criteria

(a) describe why a specific metaphysical debate arises
(b) describe specific positions which are adopted in relation to this debate
(c) explain the reasoning and assumptions on which these positions are based

OUTCOME 2

Critically evaluate positions adopted in relation to a metaphysical debate.

Performance Criteria

(a) explain the strengths and weaknesses of specific positions in relation to a specific metaphysical debate
(b) present a conclusion on the relative merits of these positions
(c) state reasons, based on aspects already discussed, in support of this conclusion

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

Details of the mandatory content for this Unit can be found in the Appendix at the end of this Unit Specification.

To demonstrate satisfactory attainment of all the Outcomes and Performance Criteria candidates must produce written and/or recorded oral evidence which samples across the mandatory content of the Unit. The evidence should be produced in response to a closed book, supervised test with a time limit of 30 minutes. It should be gathered on a single occasion.

The mandatory content for this Unit should be assessed by restricted and extended response questions. The questions should sample across the mandatory content. The questions should allow candidates to generate answers which demonstrate competence in all Outcomes and Performance Criteria. Sixty per cent of the marks available should be awarded for understanding in line with Outcome 1. The remaining 40 per cent of the marks available should be awarded for critical analysis and evaluation in line with Outcomes 1 and 2.

If re-assessment is required, it should sample across a different range of mandatory content.

The use of a cut-off score is appropriate for this assessment.

Unit assessment is holistic in nature. When reassessment is required individual candidates should therefore attempt a new assessment in its entirety to ensure that a different range of mandatory content is sampled.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Metaphysics (Higher)

The standard to be applied, cut-off score and the breadth of coverage are illustrated in the National Assessment Bank items available for this Unit. If a centre wishes to design its own assessments for this Unit they should be of a comparable standard.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Metaphysics (Higher)

This part of the Unit Specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 20 hours.

GUIDANCE ON THE CONTENT AND CONTEXT FOR THIS UNIT

Candidates study **ONE** metaphysical debate from a choice of two. The relevant metaphysical debates are:

- Debate 1: Is there a rational basis for belief in God?
- Debate 2: Do we have free will?

Candidates investigate specific positions which are adopted in relation to the chosen debate. They also study objections to these positions and replies to these objections.

A detailed outline of the mandatory content for both debates can be found in the Appendix at the end of these Support Notes. Candidates must study **ALL** content **in relation to their chosen debate**.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

Throughout their study of this Unit, candidates will encounter philosophical terms which are relevant to the study of their chosen debate. Examples of such terms would be 'cosmological', 'teleological', 'determinism', 'free will/indeterminism', 'soft determinism/compatibilism' and related concepts such as infinite regress, reasoning by analogy, causation and self-determination. Candidates should be encouraged to become familiar with and use relevant philosophical terms appropriately when discussing the issues involved and completing written tasks.

Candidates gain an understanding of specific positions which are adopted in relation to a particular metaphysical debate. The positions are prescribed. However, particular philosophers who represent each position are not prescribed. This is a matter for the professional judgement of the teacher or lecturer. For example, in relation to Arguments for Agnosticism, a centre may choose to examine the ideas of Thomas Huxley or Bertrand Russell, or indeed both. Similarly, when studying determinist views, a centre may choose to examine the ideas of Thomas Hobbes or David Hume, or both.

Care must be taken to ensure that candidates do not simply learn to describe these positions but also learn to critically analyse and evaluate them in a meaningful way. **For this reason it is essential that candidates are taught how to recognise and explain the reasoning and assumptions on which each position is based**. **It is also essential that candidates study objections to these positions and appropriate replies.** This will allow candidates to appreciate fully the nature of philosophical debate and enhance their skills of critical analysis and evaluation. In the Course assessment, questions will refer to the positions and not to specific philosophers.

Specific objections to each position, and replies to these objections, are not prescribed. These are a matter for the professional judgement of teachers and lecturers in light of the resources available and their knowledge of the prior experience of candidates. However, care must be taken to avoid distorting candidates' understanding of these perennial philosophical debates by selecting obscure or trivial objections while ignoring those which are more common or substantial.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Metaphysics (Higher)

Some of the content of this Unit can also be studied in the Intermediate 2 *Metaphysics* Unit. If a centre makes the judgement that the Intermediate 2 Unit would be more appropriate for a particular candidate, the candidate can be assessed at that level without difficulty. However, it should be noted that there are differences in the skills assessed at that level. If candidates have already studied the Intermediate 2 *Metaphysics* Unit there will be significant opportunities to build on and develop the knowledge and skills they have already acquired.

For candidates who study this Unit as part of the Higher Course, there are significant opportunities to integrate knowledge and/or skills across the Course. The knowledge and skills which are developed in the *Critical Thinking in Philosophy* Unit are relevant and should be applied when examining the debates and positions in this Unit. The skills of critical analysis and evaluation are relevant to all Units in the Course. Candidates will have many opportunities to adapt and refine these skills when using them in a variety of contexts.

Guidance on induction and a variety of classroom activities, can be found in the 'Guidance on Learning and Teaching Approaches for this Course' in the Course Details.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

Details of the appropriate conditions for assessment of competence in this Unit are outlined in the 'Evidence Requirements for the Unit' in the Statement of Standards. Centres must make sure that all Unit assessment is carried out under the stated conditions.

Candidates will develop their knowledge and skills throughout their study of all mandatory content. This would suggest that appropriate instruments of assessment may best be attempted as an end-of-Unit test.

The mandatory content for this Unit should be assessed by restricted and extended response questions. The questions should sample across the mandatory content. The questions should allow candidates to generate answers which demonstrate competence in all Outcomes and Performance Criteria. Sixty per cent of the marks available should be awarded for understanding in line with Outcome 1. The remaining 40 per cent of the marks available should be awarded for critical analysis and evaluation in line with Outcomes 1 and 2.

Appropriate instruments of assessment, marking schemes and cut-off scores are contained in the National Assessment Bank items for this Unit.

CANDIDATES WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

This Unit Specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering alternative Outcomes for Units. For information on these, please refer to the document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* (SQA, 2004).

National Unit Specification: Appendix to the statement of standards

UNIT Metaphysics (Higher)

NB: This Appendix is within the Statement of Standards, ie the mandatory requirements of the Unit.

In this Unit candidates must develop an understanding of a specific metaphysical debate and positions adopted in relation to that debate. They must choose to study **either** the debate concerning the existence of God **or** the free will/determinism debate. Candidates must then critically analyse and evaluate specific positions which are relevant to the chosen debate.

Candidates must be familiar with and use philosophical terms which are relevant to their chosen debate. Specific terms are not prescribed but further guidance on this issue can be found in the Support Notes section of this Unit specification.

As already stated, **there is a choice of option to be studied.** All candidates **must** investigate **one** of the following philosophical debates:

EITHER

Debate 1: Is there a rational basis for belief in God?

OR

Debate 2: Do we have free will?

Candidates must study specific positions in relation to the chosen debate. They must not simply learn to describe these positions but must also be able to identify the key stages of argument and the key assumptions on which these positions are based. They must also evaluate these positions by discussing their relative merits. For this reason **it is essential that candidates can explain the stages of reasoning and the assumptions on which the positions they study are based. It is also essential that candidates can present a clear conclusion on the merits of each position which is based on prior analysis**.

The mandatory content to be covered when studying **either** Debate One **or** Debate Two is outlined below.

Content

ALL candidates must study **EITHER** Debate 1 **OR** Debate 2.

Debate 1: Is there a rational basis for belief in God?

a)	The universe requires an ultimate explanation	The Cosmological Argument Objections Replies
b)	Apparent order and purpose in the universe requires an explanation	The Teleological Argument Objections Replies

National Unit Specification: Appendix to the statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Metaphysics (Higher)

c)	It is impossible to decide if God exists	Arguments for Agnosticism Objections Replies

Debate 2: Do we have free will?

a)	*Human experience of a sense of choice implies we have free will*	Psychological basis for free will Objections Replies
b)	*Moral accountability presupposes that we have free will*	Moral basis for free will Objections Replies
c)	*The causal principles implies that our choices are predetermined*	Scientific basis for determinism Objections Replies
d)	*Free will as freedom from constraint*	Compatibilism/soft determinism Objections Replies

National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Epistemology (Higher)

CODE To be allocated

COURSE Philosophy (Higher)

SUMMARY

This Unit is a mandatory Unit of the Higher Philosophy Course, but it can also be taken as a free-standing Unit.

This Unit offers progression for candidates who have studied the Intermediate 2 Philosophy Course or Units. It is also suitable as a Higher level introduction for those who have no background in the subject. The issues studied in this Unit underlie many questions of both philosophical and general human interest such as 'Can we know what other people are thinking and feeling?', 'Can we know about things that we haven't experienced?' and 'Can we be certain that the world will continue to work in the way it does now?'

Candidates develop the knowledge and skills necessary to understand and investigate specific philosophical issues in the area of epistemology. They investigate three specific questions — 'Why are knowledge claims a problem in philosophy?', 'What is knowledge?' and 'Can knowledge claims be justified?' — and study specific extracts from the writings of either René Descartes or David Hume.

Specific philosophical questions, issues, positions and extracts are studied in this Unit but the critical thinking skills developed are relevant in a wide variety of contexts. These skills prepare candidates for the study of Philosophy at Advanced Higher or in courses at Further Education colleges or Higher Education Institutions. Candidates will also be prepared for the study of any other subject which requires the critical analysis and evaluation of complex or abstract ideas. In addition, candidates will have demonstrated the skills necessary for entry into any field of employment where the ability to analyse issues and arguments, and evaluate complex or abstract ideas, is required.

Administrative Information

Superclass:

Publication date: October 2005

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 01

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2005

This publication may be reproduced in whole or in part for educational purposes provided that no profit is derived from reproduction and that, if reproduced in part, the source is acknowledged.

Additional copies of this Unit specification can be purchased from the Scottish Qualifications Authority. The cost for each Unit specification is £2.50. (A handling charge of £1.95 will apply to all orders for priced items.)

National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

UNIT Epistemology (Higher)

OUTCOMES

1 Demonstrate an understanding of philosophical issues in the area of epistemology.
2 Critically analyse a standard philosophical position in the area of epistemology.
3 Critically evaluate a standard philosophical position in the area of epistemology.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, candidates would normally be expected to have attained one of the following, or equivalent:

- Intermediate 2 Philosophy Course or Unit(s)
- Intermediate 2 Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies Course or Unit(s)
- A social subjects Course or Unit(s) at Intermediate 2

CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Higher (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 6*).

**SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

CORE SKILLS

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components in this Unit.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT Epistemology (Higher)

Acceptable performance in this Unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the Unit Specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

OUTCOME 1

Demonstrate an understanding of philosophical issues in the area of epistemology

Performance Criteria

(a) describe the tripartite theory of knowledge
(b) describe specific philosophical problems associated with this theory
(c) describe the key philosophical positions of scepticism, rationalism and empiricism

OUTCOME 2

Critically analyse a standard philosophical position in the area of epistemology

Performance Criteria

(a) describe the account of knowledge given by one specific philosopher
(b) explain the reasoning and assumptions on which this account is based
(c) cite specific extracts from the writings of this philosopher in support of the explanation

OUTCOME 3

Critically evaluate a standard philosophical position in the area of epistemology

Performance Criteria

(a) explain the strengths and weaknesses of the account of knowledge given by one specific philosopher
(b) present a conclusion on the persuasiveness of this account of knowledge
(c) state reasons in support of this conclusion which are based on evidence and sources previously discussed

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Epistemology (Higher)

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

Details of the mandatory content for this Unit can be found in the Appendix at the end of this Unit Specification.

To demonstrate satisfactory attainment of all the Outcomes and Performance Criteria candidates must produce written and/or recorded oral evidence which samples across the mandatory content. The evidence should be produced in response to a closed book, supervised test with a time limit of one hour. It should be gathered on a single occasion.

The mandatory content for this Unit should be assessed by restricted response questions together with a series of structured questions based on a section of prescribed text. The questions should sample across the mandatory content. The questions should allow candidates to generate answers which demonstrate competence in all Outcomes and Performance Criteria. Sixty per cent of the marks available should be awarded for understanding in line with Outcome 1. The remaining 40 per cent of the marks available should be awarded for critical analysis and evaluation in line with Outcomes 2 and 3.

If re-assessment is required, it should sample across a different range of mandatory content.

The use of a cut-off score is appropriate for this assessment.

Unit assessment is holistic in nature. When reassessment is required individual candidates should therefore attempt a new assessment in its entirety to ensure that a different range of mandatory content is sampled.

The standard to be applied, cut-off score and the breadth of coverage are illustrated in the National Assessment Bank items available for this Unit. If a centre wishes to design its own assessments for this Unit they should be of a comparable standard.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Epistemology (Higher)

This part of the Unit Specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

GUIDANCE ON THE CONTENT AND CONTEXT FOR THIS UNIT

In this Unit candidates study specific philosophical issues in the area of Epistemology. They also study the positions of either René Descartes or David Hume. The Unit is divided into two Sections and a brief overview of each Section appears below:

Section 1:

There is no choice in this Section of the Unit and candidates must study all mandatory content.

Candidates investigate three questions which are relevant in the area of epistemology. The three questions are:

- Why are knowledge claims a problem in philosophy?
- What is knowledge?
- Can knowledge claims be justified?

Section 2:

In this Section of the Unit there is a choice of option to be studied. Candidates investigate **either** a specific rationalist **or** a specific empiricist epistemological position. The options are:

- Option A: Descartes' Rationalism

OR

- Option B: Hume's Empiricism

Candidates must study all mandatory content in relation to their chosen option.

The positions adopted by each philosopher are based on reasoning and assumptions which can only properly be understood by examining the writings of the relevant philosopher. Candidates must therefore investigate the chosen position by studying key extracts from the writings of that philosopher. **The key extracts are prescribed.**

A detailed outline of all mandatory content for each Section, including the key extracts for Section 2, can be found in the Appendix at the end of these Support Notes.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Epistemology (Higher)

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

Throughout their study of this Unit, candidates will encounter philosophical terms which are relevant to the study of epistemological issues. Examples of such terms would be 'rationalism', 'empiricism' and 'scepticism' as well as the related concepts of a priori/necessary truth, a posteriori/contingent truth, the mind as tabula rasa/blank slate and innate ideas. Candidates should be encouraged to become familiar with and use such philosophical terms when discussing the issues involved and completing written tasks.

In **Section 1** candidates gain an understanding of some time-honoured issues in the area of epistemology. These issues are abstract in nature therefore care must be taken to illustrate them in a way that is accessible to Higher candidates. The illustrations used are a matter for the professional judgement of the teacher or lecturer in light of the resources available and his/her knowledge of the prior experience of candidates. They might involve reading and discussing accessible philosophical texts, drawing on experiences or scenarios which will be familiar to candidates or investigating contemporary fictional treatments of the issues. For example, philosophical issues surrounding appearance and reality might be introduced through an exploration of Plato's 'Simile of the Cave', optical illusions or popular films such as *The Matrix* and *Total Recall*.

Care must also be taken to ensure that candidates have a sound understanding of **all** issues in Section 1 of this Unit. Candidates will need this understanding to critically analyse the position chosen in Section 2 in a meaningful way. It is therefore recommended that centres deliver Section 1 before investigating either position in Section 2. For the same reason, it is also of vital importance that candidates are familiar with **ALL** content in Section 1.

In **Section 2**, candidates study **one** option from **a choice of two**. The option chosen is a matter for the professional judgement of the teacher or lecturer in light of the resources available and his/her knowledge of the prior experience of candidates. Candidates must apply their understanding of the issues in Section 1, when critically analysing and evaluating the chosen position. It is therefore essential that teachers or lecturers maximise opportunities to integrate the understanding gained in Section 1 when delivering Section 2.

Candidates must also critically analyse the reasoning and assumptions on which the position chosen in Section 2 is based. These skills can be acquired only if candidates engage with the writings of the relevant philosopher; summaries and paraphrases do not always contain the relevant key stages of reasoning. For this reason, it is essential that candidates are very familiar with all prescribed extracts. It is also recommended that prescribed extracts are used to introduce key stages in the relevant philosopher's reasoning. Summaries or paraphrases of the writer's ideas are useful when filling gaps between key stages in the argument or to help overcome problems with understanding or language. However, they should not be used as a substitute for a study of the key extracts.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Epistemology (Higher)

Some of the content of this Unit can also be studied in the Intermediate 2 *Epistemology* Unit. If a centre makes the judgement that the Intermediate 2 Unit would be more appropriate for a particular candidate, the candidate can be assessed at that level without difficulty. However, it should be noted that there are differences in the skills assessed at that level.

If candidates have already studied the Intermediate 2 *Epistemology* Unit there will be significant opportunities to build on and develop the knowledge and skills they have already acquired. However, it may be advisable to choose a different Option in Section 2 at Higher level. This will help to maintain student motivation and interest. It will also allow candidates to develop their knowledge and skills in a different context.

For candidates who study this Unit as part of the Higher Course, there are significant opportunities to integrate knowledge and/or skills in the remaining three Units. Understanding of key terms and issues in the area of epistemology are also relevant when studying the *Moral Philosophy* and *Metaphysics* Units. In addition, the skills acquired during the study of the *Critical Thinking in Philosophy* Unit will help candidates to analyse and evaluate the issues, positions and reasoning which they study in this Unit. The skills of critical analysis and evaluation apply to all four Units in the Course. Candidates will have many opportunities to adapt and refine them in a variety of contexts while studying the Course.

Guidance on induction and a variety of classroom activities, can be found in the 'Guidance on Learning and Teaching Approaches for this Course' in the Course Details.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

Details of the appropriate conditions for assessment of competence in this Unit are outlined in the 'Evidence Requirements for the Unit' in the Statement of Standards. Centres must make sure that all Unit assessment is carried out under the stated conditions.

Candidates will develop their knowledge and skills throughout their study of all mandatory content. This would suggest that appropriate instruments of assessment may best be attempted as an end of Unit test.

The mandatory content for this Unit should be assessed by restricted response questions together with a series of structured questions based on a section of prescribed text. The questions should sample across the mandatory content and should allow candidates to generate answers which demonstrate competence in all Outcomes and Performance Criteria. Sixty per cent of the marks available should be awarded for understanding in line with Outcome 1. The remaining 40 per cent of the marks available should be awarded for Critical Analysis and Evaluation in line with Outcomes 2 and 3.

Appropriate instruments of assessment, marking schemes and cut-off scores are contained in the National Assessment Bank items for this Unit.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Epistemology (Higher)

CANDIDATES WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

This Unit Specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering alternative Outcomes for Units. For information on these, please refer to the document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* (SQA, 2004).

National Unit Specification: Appendix to the statement of standards

UNIT Epistemology (Higher)

NB: This Appendix is within the statement of standards, ie the mandatory requirements of the Unit

In this Unit candidates must develop the knowledge and skills necessary to understand and investigate specific philosophical issues in the area of epistemology. They must investigate three questions — 'Why are knowledge claims a problem in philosophy?', 'What is knowledge?' and 'Can knowledge claims be justified?' — and study the position adopted by **either** René Descartes **or** David Hume in relation to these questions. The chosen position must be studied with reference to key extracts from the writings of the relevant philosopher. The issues to be studied, relevant positions and key extracts are detailed under the content for **Sections 1** and **2** of this Appendix. **Candidates must study all content in Section 1** and the epistemological position of **either** René Descartes **or** David Hume **in Section 2**.

Candidates must be familiar with and use philosophical terms which are relevant to both Section 1 and their chosen option in Section 2. Specific terms are not prescribed but further guidance on this issue can be found in the 'Guidance on Learning and Teaching Approaches for this Unit' section of this Unit specification.

Section 1:

Candidates must study all content in this Section. Candidates are introduced to specific philosophical issues in the area of epistemology. They investigate some of the key issues involved by studying the philosophical differences between appearance and reality and distinctions between belief, knowledge and certainty. Candidates then study the tripartite theory of knowledge and specific problems associated with this theory, including the challenge of scepticism.

Candidates also develop knowledge and understanding of two specific standard epistemological positions. The two positions studied are rationalism and empiricism. Both positions suggest that knowledge claims can be justified but rely on arguments which claim that justification is achieved through different sources. The empiricist position also suggests that knowledge is limited to that which can be known through sense experience while the rationalist position suggests that reason can also provide knowledge without reference to sense experience.

During their study of the mandatory content of Section 1, candidates gain an understanding of philosophical issues in the area of epistemology. **This understanding should be used, by candidates, to inform their critical analysis and evaluation of the chosen position in Section 2.** However, an independent critical analysis and evaluation of the issues and positions in Section 1 is not required in Unit or Course Assessment.

The specific positions and the key features which must be studied are outlined below:

Why are knowledge claims a problem in philosophy?

Appearance and reality
Belief, knowledge and certainty

National Unit Specification: Appendix to the statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Epistemology (Higher)

What is knowledge?

The distinction between knowing 'how' and knowing 'that'

The Tripartite Theory of Knowledge	Knowledge as justified true belief
Problems with the Tripartite Theory	The problem of accidental correctness The problem of justification: the challenge of Scepticism (unreliability of the senses, limitations of reason, infinite regress of justifications)

Can knowledge claims be justified?

The central claims of empiricism and rationalism which must be studied are outlined in the table below:

EMPIRICISM	RATIONALISM
♦ the mind as tabula rasa	♦ the mind contains innate ideas
♦ experience as the source of all ideas (concepts)	♦ the senses can be unreliable
♦ reason gives knowledge of logical connections between ideas not knowledge about the world	♦ self evident truths about the world can be grasped by the mind without reference to the senses
♦ only experience gives us knowledge about the world	♦ reason is the most reliable source of knowledge about the world

Section 2:

There is a choice of option in Section 2. All candidates must investigate **ONE** of the following options:

EITHER

The study of a rationalist epistemological position through an examination of key extracts from the writings of René Descartes.

OR

The study of an empiricist epistemological position through an examination of key extracts from the writings of David Hume.

National Unit Specification: Appendix to the statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Epistemology (Higher)

By examining key extracts from the writings of the chosen philosopher, candidates will be able to identify the reasoning and assumptions which give rise to the standard positions of either rationalism or empiricism. Candidates must not simply learn to describe the ideas of the chosen philosopher. They must also develop the ability to identify key stages, key assumptions and weaknesses in the chosen philosopher's position. **For this reason, it is essential that candidates explain and, where appropriate criticise, the stages of reasoning and the assumptions which are present in each of the extracts prescribed in this Section.**

The mandatory content to be covered in relation to each option is outlined below:

Option A: Descartes' Rationalism

Searching for a reliable foundation for knowledge:	
Mistrust of the Senses	Meditation 1
The Dream Argument	Meditation 1
The Evil Genius Argument	Meditation 1
Reason as the foundation of knowledge:	
The Cogito	Meditation 2
God as guarantor of clear and distinct perceptions	Meditation 3
Refuting sceptical arguments:	
God is no deceiver therefore material reality exists	Meditation 6
Errors in sense perception can be recognised and corrected	Meditation 6
Refuting the Dream Argument	Meditation 6

Option B: Hume's Empiricism

The origin of ideas:	
Perceptions: Impressions and Ideas	Section II
Simple and Complex Ideas	Section II
The Missing Shade of Blue	Section II
What we can know:	
Implicit rejection of Innate Ideas	Section II
Relations of Ideas and Matters of Fact (Hume's Fork)	Section IV: I
Knowledge about the world:	
Habit and Custom	Section IV: II
The Reason of Animals	Section IX

Prescribed Texts

The following versions of the philosophical texts are prescribed and extracts from these versions will appear in both Unit and Course assessment:

Meditations on First Philosophy: René Descartes
Translated by Donald Cress, Hackett 1993

An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding: David Hume
Hackett 1993

National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Moral Philosophy (Higher)

CODE To be allocated

COURSE Philosophy (Higher)

SUMMARY

This Unit is a mandatory Unit of the Higher Philosophy Course, but it can also be taken as a free-standing Unit.

This Unit offers progression for candidates who have studied the Intermediate 2 Philosophy Course or Units. It is also suitable as a Higher level introduction for those who have no background in the subject. Candidates develop the knowledge and skills necessary to understand theories and meta-ethical positions in the area of moral philosophy. The theories and positions studied in this Unit are of both philosophical and general human interest. They are relevant to such questions as 'What do we mean when we say that an action is right or wrong?', 'How can we decide the way we should act?' and 'Why is it difficult to agree a common approach to moral issues?'

Specific normative theories and meta-ethical positions are studied in this Unit but the critical thinking skills developed are relevant in a wide variety of contexts. These skills prepare candidates for the study of Philosophy at Advanced Higher or in courses at Further Education colleges or Higher Education Institutions. Candidates will also be prepared for the study of any other subject which requires the critical analysis and evaluation of complex or abstract issues. In addition, candidates will have demonstrated the skills necessary for entry into any field of employment where the ability to analyse issues and arguments, and evaluate complex or abstract ideas, is required. They will also have demonstrated an awareness of the complexity involved in ethical judgements.

OUTCOMES

1 Demonstrate an understanding of normative moral theories.
2 Critically analyse normative moral theories.
3 Critically evaluate normative moral theories.
4 Critically evaluate a meta-ethical position concerning the nature of moral judgements.

Administrative Information

Superclass:

Publication date: October 2005

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 01

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2005

This publication may be reproduced in whole or in part for educational purposes provided that no profit is derived from reproduction and that, if reproduced in part, the source is acknowledged.

Additional copies of this Unit specification can be purchased from the Scottish Qualifications Authority. The cost for each Unit specification is £2.50. (A handling charge of £1.95 will apply to all orders for priced items.)

National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

UNIT Moral Philosophy (Higher)

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, candidates would normally be expected to have attained one of the following, or equivalent:

- Intermediate 2 Philosophy Course or Unit(s)
- Intermediate 2 Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies Course or Unit(s)
- A social subjects Course or Unit(s) at Intermediate 2

CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Higher (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 6*).

**SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

CORE SKILLS

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components in this Unit.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT Moral Philosophy (Higher)

Acceptable performance in this Unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the Unit Specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

OUTCOME 1

Demonstrate an understanding of normative moral theories

Performance Criteria

(a) describe specific normative moral theories
(b) refer to moral issues as part of these descriptions

OUTCOME 2

Critically analyse normative moral theories

Performance Criteria

(a) explain the reasoning and assumptions on which specific normative theories are based
(b) explain the implication of these theories when making moral judgements
(c) refer to moral issues as part of this analysis

OUTCOME 3

Critically evaluate normative moral theories

Performance Criteria

(a) explain the strengths and weaknesses of specific normative moral theories
(b) refer to moral issues as part of this explanation
(c) present a conclusion on the relative merits of specific normative moral theories
(d) state reasons in support of this conclusion which are based on aspects already discussed

OUTCOME 4

Critically evaluate a meta-ethical position concerning the nature of moral judgements.

Performance criteria

(a) describe the emotivist position concerning the nature of moral judgements
(b) explain the reasoning and assumptions on which this position is based
(c) explain the strengths and weaknesses of this position
(d) use examples of moral statements to illustrate the points made

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Moral Philosophy (Higher)

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

Details of the mandatory content for this Unit can be found in the Appendix at the end of this Unit Specification.

To demonstrate satisfactory attainment of all the Outcomes and Performance Criteria candidates must produce written and/or recorded oral evidence which samples across the mandatory content of the Unit. The evidence should be produced in response to a closed book, supervised test with a time limit of one hour. It should be gathered on a single occasion.

The mandatory content for this Unit should be assessed by restricted and extended response questions. The questions should sample across the mandatory content and allow candidates to generate answers which demonstrate competence in all Outcomes and Performance Criteria. Sixty per cent of the marks available should be awarded for knowledge and understanding in line with Outcomes 1 and 4. The remaining 40 per cent of the marks available should be awarded for Critical Analysis and Evaluation in line with Outcomes 2, 3 and 4.

If re-assessment is required, it should sample across a different range of mandatory content.

The use of a cut-off score is appropriate for this assessment.

Unit assessment is holistic in nature. When reassessment is required individual candidates should therefore attempt a new assessment in its entirety to ensure that a different range of mandatory content is sampled.

The standard to be applied, cut-off score and the breadth of coverage are illustrated in the National Assessment Bank items available for this Unit. If a centre wishes to design its own assessments for this Unit they should be of a comparable standard.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Moral Philosophy (Higher)

This part of the Unit Specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

GUIDANCE ON THE CONTENT AND CONTEXT FOR THIS UNIT

Candidates must study **ALL** content in **BOTH** sections. A brief overview of each Section appears below:

Section 1:

In this section of the Unit candidates investigate two specific normative moral theories which illustrate both a **consequentialist** and a **deontological** approach to moral judgements. The specific theories are:

- the consequentialist theory of Utilitarianism as illustrated by the ideas of Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill
- the deontological theory of Immanuel Kant

Section 2:

In this Section of the Unit candidates are introduced to one specific meta-ethical issue concerning the nature of moral judgements. They study the linguistic issue of what a person is doing when he/she claims that an action is right or wrong. Candidates focus on the question **'What are we doing when we claim that an action is morally right?**' and investigate an **emotivist** response to this question.

Questions in Unit and Course assessment will sample across the mandatory content of **BOTH** sections. It is therefore of vital importance that candidates are familiar with **ALL** content in **BOTH** sections.

A detailed outline of the mandatory content for each Section can be found in the Appendix at the end of these Support Notes.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

Throughout their study of this Unit, candidates will encounter philosophical terms which are relevant to the study of normative moral theories and meta-ethical issues. Examples of such terms would be 'consequentialist', 'deontological', 'normative', 'meta-ethical' and such related concepts as hedonic calculus, maxim, intrinsic and instrumental. Candidates should be encouraged to become familiar with and use relevant philosophical terms when discussing the issues involved and completing written tasks.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Moral Philosophy (Higher)

In **Section 1** candidates gain an understanding of two specific normative moral theories which illustrate both a consequentialist and a deontological approach to moral judgements. The concepts involved are abstract in nature therefore care must be taken to illustrate them in a way that is accessible to Higher candidates. Further, it is a requirement of both Unit and Course assessment that candidates refer to moral issues when describing, analysing and evaluating these theories. Teachers and lecturers should therefore illustrate the theories, related concepts and criticisms with reference to moral issues and scenarios. **However, it is important to avoid an in-depth study of specific moral issues; illustrations should focus only on aspects of the moral issues or scenarios that will help candidates to understand the specific theories, concepts and criticisms they study.**

The moral issues and scenarios chosen for illustration are a matter for the professional judgement of the teacher or lecturer in light of the resources available and his/her knowledge of the prior experience of candidates. They should be directly relevant to the aspects of the theories being examined and be chosen to stimulate discussion and promote understanding.
For example:

- the problem of justice, in relation to Utilitarianism, might be illustrated with reference to crime and punishment. Candidates could examine the implications of the Greatest Happiness Principle in relation to whether it is better to 'punish' an innocent person in order to deter others, rather than allow a crime to appear to go unpunished. They could also discuss the different conclusions which might be reached by applying an Act or Rule Utilitarian approach

- the problem of ignoring consequences, in relation to Kant, could be illustrated with reference to a scenario in which a vulnerable, innocent person is being sought by a cruel authority. In order to save the innocent person it is necessary to lie, but lying would go against Kant's principle of Universalisability. Candidates could also discuss the problem of competing duties in relation to such a case

It is of vital importance that candidates do not simply learn to describe the normative theories and the criticisms they study, but also learn to discuss and apply them. By applying Utilitarian and Kantian principles to a wide variety of issues and scenarios, candidates will enhance their understanding and their ability to critically analyse and evaluate them in a meaningful way.

In **Section 2**, candidates study **one** meta-ethical issue concerning the nature of moral judgements. This issue is studied with reference to the meta-ethical theory of emotivism. It is important that candidates understand that emotivism is **not** a normative theory and should not be contrasted with Utilitarianism or Kant. Emotivism makes specific claims about the **nature** of moral judgements and is not concerned with defining what right or wrong actions consist of.

Some of the content of Section 1 in this Unit can also be studied in the Intermediate 2 *Moral Philosophy* Unit. If a centre makes the judgement that the Intermediate 2 Unit would be more appropriate for a particular candidate, the candidate can be assessed at that level without difficulty. However, it should be noted that there are differences in the skills assessed at that level. If candidates have already studied the Intermediate 2 *Moral Philosophy* Unit there will be significant opportunities to build on and develop the knowledge and skills they have already acquired.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Moral Philosophy (Higher)

For candidates who study this Unit as part of the Higher Course, there are significant opportunities to integrate knowledge and/or skills in the remaining three Units. The knowledge and skills which are developed in the *Critical Thinking in Philosophy* Unit are relevant and should be applied when examining the normative theories and meta-ethical issues in this Unit. The skills of critical analysis and evaluation apply to all Units in the Course. Candidates will have many opportunities to adapt and refine these skills when using them in a variety of contexts.

Guidance on setting the climate for effective learning and teaching, and a variety of classroom activities, can be found in the 'Guidance on Learning and Teaching Approaches for this Course' in the Course Details.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

Details of the appropriate conditions for assessment of competence in this Unit are outlined in the 'Evidence Requirements for the Unit' in the Statement of Standards. Centres must make sure that all Unit assessment is carried out under the stated conditions.

Candidates will develop their knowledge and skills throughout their study of all mandatory content. This would suggest that appropriate instruments of assessment may best be attempted as an 'end of Unit' test.

The mandatory content for this Unit should be assessed by extended and restricted response questions. The questions should sample across the mandatory content of Sections 1 and 2. The questions should allow candidates to generate answers which demonstrate competence in all Outcomes and Performance Criteria. Sixty per cent of the marks available should be awarded for understanding in line with Outcomes 1 and 4. The remaining 40 per cent of the marks available should be awarded for Critical Analysis and Evaluation in line with Outcomes 2, 3 and 4.

Appropriate instruments of assessment, marking schemes and cut-off scores are contained in the National Assessment Bank items for this Unit.

CANDIDATES WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

This Unit Specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering alternative Outcomes for Units. For information on these, please refer to the document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* (SQA, 2004).

National Unit Specification: Appendix to the statement of standards

UNIT Moral Philosophy (Higher)

NB: This Appendix is within the statement of standards, ie the mandatory requirements of the Unit

In this Unit candidates must develop the knowledge and skills necessary to understand and investigate normative theories and positions in the area of moral philosophy. The Unit is divided into two sections. In **Section 1** candidates must investigate specific normative moral theories. In **Section 2** they must gain an understanding of the meta-ethical position of emotivism by investigating the question 'What are we doing (ie what speech act do we perform) when we say that an action is morally right?' The specific normative theories and aspects of emotivism to be studied are detailed in the mandatory content at the end of this Appendix. **Candidates must study ALL content in BOTH Sections; there are no options in this Unit.**

Candidates must be familiar with and use philosophical terms which are relevant to both Section 1 and Section 2. Specific terms are not prescribed but further guidance on this issue can be found in the 'Guidance on Learning and Teaching Approaches for this Unit' section of this Unit specification.

Section 1: Normative Theories

In **Section 1** candidates study two specific normative moral theories which illustrate consequentialist and deontological approaches to moral judgements. The Utilitarian ideas of Bentham and Mill are studied to illustrate one possible consequentialist approach. The ideas of Kant are studied to illustrate one possible deontological approach.

Candidates must not simply learn to describe the specific normative theories. They must also learn to critically analyse and evaluate them. Critical analysis must involve identifying the reasoning and assumptions on which the specific theories are based and explaining the implications of these theories when making moral judgements. Critical evaluation must involve explaining the strengths and weaknesses of these theories as well as presenting a reasoned conclusion on their relative merits.

Candidates at Higher level cannot be expected to grasp the relatively complex ideas of Bentham, Mill and Kant through abstract study alone. **For this reason, teachers and lecturers should illustrate the theories, and their implications, strengths and weaknesses, with reference to relevant moral issues.** Specific moral issues are not prescribed. This is a matter for the professional judgement of teachers or lecturers based on the range of candidates studying the Unit and the resources available. However, **care should be taken to ensure that the moral issues selected are relevant to the mandatory content and Evidence Requirements of this Unit**. Candidates must refer to moral issues in response to questions in Unit and Course assessment.

National Unit Specification: Appendix to the statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Moral Philosophy (Higher)

The aspects of each theory which must be covered are outlined below:

a) Utilitarianism as an example of a consequentialist theory

Consequentialist approaches to ethics

The greatest happiness principle

Calculating potential happiness	Bentham's hedonic calculus Mill's higher and lower pleasures Mill's competent judges
Act v Rule Utilitarianism	Assessing each situation individually v adopting maxims which tend to promote the greatest happiness
Difficulties/weaknesses	The problem of quantifying happiness The problems with consequences: predictable or actual? Short, medium or long-term? Local or global? The problem with 'happiness': the happiness of sadists? The problem of justice: sacrificing the minority for the sake of the majority The potential of imposing unrealistically high moral demands

b) Kant's moral theory as an example of a deontological theory

Deontological approaches to ethics

The sovereignty of reason
The Good Will
Duty v Inclination

The Categorical Imperative	Universalisability Human beings as ends in themselves, never only as means to an end
Difficulties/weaknesses	The problem of ignoring consequences The problem of identifying maxims The problem of competing duties The problem of ignoring other 'good' motives The problem of potentially misguided perceptions of duty

National Unit Specification: Appendix to the statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Moral Philosophy (Higher)

Section 2: Emotivism

Candidates are introduced to one specific meta-ethical issue concerning the nature of moral statements. They study the linguistic issue of what we are doing **(ie what 'speech act' we perform)** when we claim that an action is right or wrong. To provide a focus for this study candidates investigate the question 'What are we doing when we claim that an action is morally right?' They then investigate the emotivist response to this question.

Candidates studying any meta-ethical position at Higher level cannot be expected to grasp the relatively complex ideas involved through abstract study alone. **For this reason teachers and lecturers should illustrate the position of Emotivism with reference to a variety of statements concerning real moral issues.** Specific statements are not prescribed. This is a matter for the professional judgement of teachers or lecturers based on the range of candidates studying the Unit.

The aspects of Emotivism which must be covered are outlined below:

Question: 'What are we doing when we claim that an action is morally right?'

Emotivism	moral judgements do not state facts moral judgements are neither true nor false moral judgements as expressions of emotion or attitude
Difficulties/weaknesses	the problem of lack of compatibility with everyday human understanding the problem of judging competing moral claims